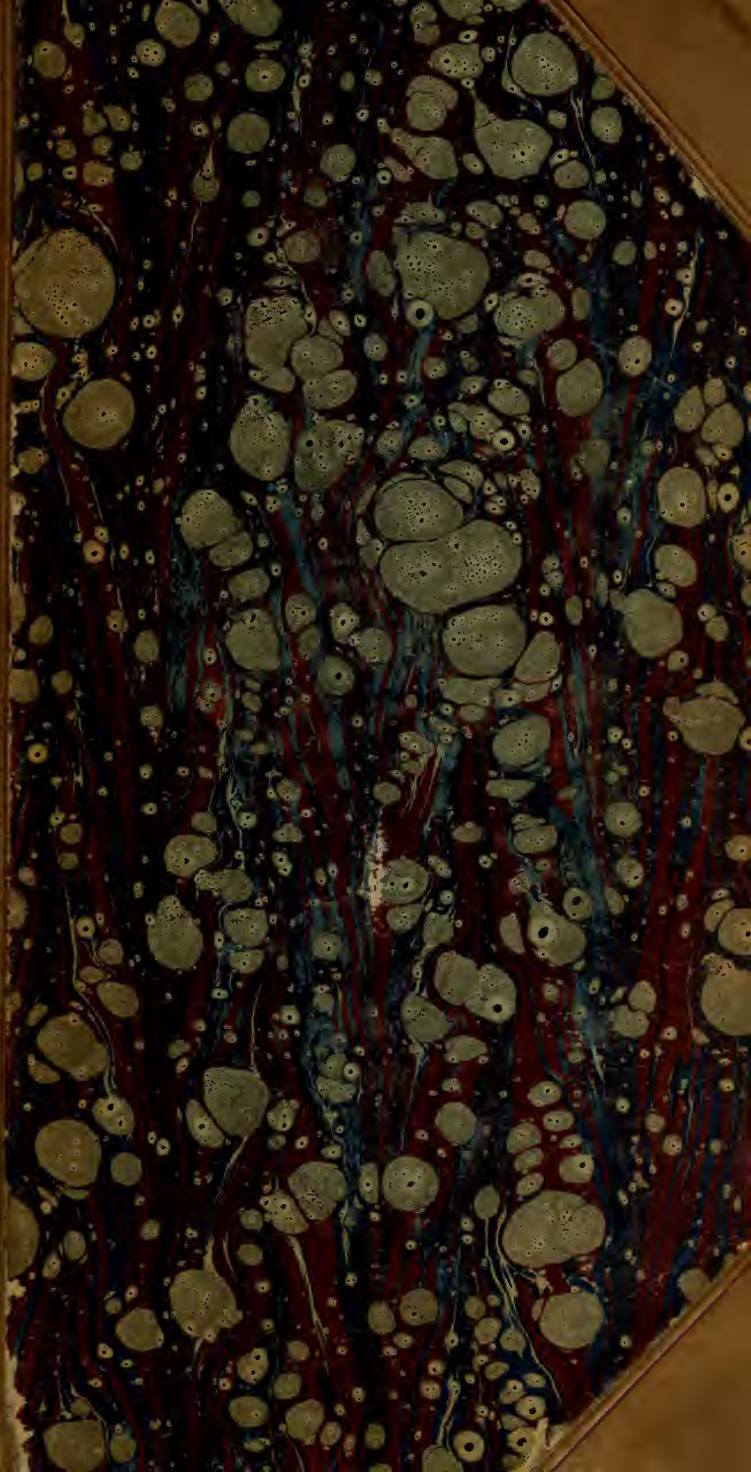

A CENSUS OF RELIGIONS

DENOMINATIONAL WORSHIP

THE NATIONAL CHURCH

THREE ESSAYS

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE *Nonconformist and Independent* of January 6, 1881, bestowed upon the following essay, just printed in the *Nineteenth Century*, a highly uncomplimentary notice, in which were indicated two errors of which I had been guilty.

My first sin was this (p. 14)—I had erred in contrasting Mr. Mann's return in 1851 of 20,390 Nonconformist Buildings with the number of Registered Chapels given in the Registrar-General's Report of 1877 at 19,064. The Report (I am now told) excludes a class of Chapels included in Mr. Mann's return. I accept this correction, and I note it as evidence of the futility of founding conclusions upon a comparison of different unofficial statistics.

My second sin was that I had inadvertently affixed the date of 1870 to Lord Palmerston's speech of June 11, 1860. I repair the error, and seize the opportunity of doing fuller justice to Lord Palmerston's speech (*Hansard*, No. 159, p. 1734).

Lord Palmerston, concurring with Mr. Baines in thinking there is a value in a periodical enumeration of the different sections of the Christian Church, continued: "I do not agree with "him as to the mode of obtaining the information, because "nothing could be more fallacious than the mode adopted in "1851. . . . No inference of value could be drawn from "such information, and I protest against adopting such a mode, "attended with trouble and leading to no reasonable conclusion. " . . . With respect to the enumeration of 1851, I do not "believe that there was fraud practised, but I cannot but think "that there is no truth whatever in the conclusions which have "been drawn from it. . . . With all respect to the noncon-

" forming body I still entertain the opinion that their objections
" . . . are not borne out by any reasons that will bear the
" test of argument. We defer to their feelings, but we cannot
" assent to their reasoning."

Lord Palmerston, though he issued no official instruction, had no doubt verbally assented to the Registrar-General's inquiry into the accommodation for religious worship. How greatly he desired a genuine Religious Census, and how entirely unsatisfactory as a substitute he thought the Worship inquiry, can be doubted by no one who reads the speech or the above extracts. Lord Palmerston's protest against conclusions drawn from a census of worship is forcibly illustrated by a contrast of Mr. Miall's return of "Attendances," and Canon Hume's record of "Religious Profession," accomplished during the past year with great care and labour, and now published as an "*Ecclesiastical* " *Census of Liverpool.*"

Mr. C. Miall's statistics mentioned at page 23 include those of Liverpool, with its population of 552,425; and he divides the entire attendances at public worship of 146,012 between—Church of England, 54,551, or 37·4 per cent.; Other denominations, 91,461, or 62·6 per cent.

Canon Hume in the same area numbered (owing to the floating population) only 499,042 souls, whose religious professions were—Dissenters and others, 88,861, or 17·8 per cent.; Roman Catholics, 140,115, or 28·1 per cent.; Religion unknown, 5,398, or 1·1 per cent.; Other than Church of England, 234,374, or 47 per cent.; Church of England, 264,668, or 53 per cent.

Rectifying Mr. C. Miall's grand total for 70 towns by the test of Liverpool, the proportions would be—Churchmen, not 38·66, but 54·78 per cent.; Other denominations, not 61·34, but 45·22 per cent. All England and Wales would, if polled, present a still wider variation from his computations.

24 PRINCE'S GATE, 21*st March*, 1882.

A CENSUS OF RELIGIONS.*

"WHETHER we regard a people merely in their secular capacity, "as partners in a great association for promoting the stability, "the opulence, the peaceful glory of a state; or view them in "their loftier character as subjects of a higher kingdom—swift "and momentary travellers towards a never-ending destiny; in "either aspect the degree and the direction of religious sentiment "in a community are subjects of the weightiest import—in the "one case to the temporal guardians of a nation—to its spiritual "teachers in the other. Statesmen—aware to what a great "extent the liberty or bondage, industry or indolence, prosperity "or poverty of any people, are the fruits of its religious creed, "and knowing also how extensively religious feelings tinge "political opinions—find an accurate acquaintance with the "various degrees and forms in which religious sentiment is "manifested indispensable to a correct appreciation either of "the country's actual condition or of its prospective tendency, "and equally essential to enable them to legislate with safety "upon questions where religious principles or prejudices are "inextricably involved."

A more appropriate introduction to our subject will not easily be found than the above extract from the second page of Mr. Horace Mann's *Report* to the Registrar-General upon the accommodation for religious worship in 1851. Having read it, it is hard to conceive that any question should be raised as to the principle involved, or as to the expediency of adopting the most direct and efficient means for obtaining the desired information upon the religion of the nation.

In our neglect of a Religious Census we stand nearly, if not quite, alone amidst civilised nations. England is unfavourably distinguished, not only from foreign countries, but from an

* Reprinted (by permission) from *Nineteenth Century* of January 1881.

important portion of the United Kingdom. Ireland has a Religious Census—why should England be deprived of the advantage which a knowledge of the religion of the people brings to their good government? The Irish Census Act provides that an account in writing be taken of the *religious profession* of every person; but this item of information is omitted from the list of requisites to be answered in the English schedule.

Why is the system pursued on this side of the Irish Channel different from that pursued on the other? The importance of the question has only come into prominence within the last thirty years, and its investigation need not therefore carry our retrospect beyond that period.

The Census Bill of 1850 gave the Secretary of State power to issue questions referring, not alone to the numbers, ages, and occupations of the people, but also to such "further particulars" as might seem to him advisable, and the Registrar-General was disposed to adopt as an interpretation of "further particulars" the collection of intelligence as to the "number, varieties, and "capabilities" of the religious and scholastic institutions of the country. The House of Peers, however, raised an objection to the proposed inquiry in connection with the penal sections of the Act, and the objection being confirmed by the law officers of the Crown, the proposed extension of the inquiry under statutory obligation was relinquished.

It was intended that the deficiencies of the Census Act of 1850 should be supplied in the Census Act of 1860, and the Bill was accordingly presented to the House of Commons with a provision for obtaining the *religious profession*, as well as the age, sex, and occupation of every individual. This provision was opposed by the Nonconformists, and its omission was moved by Mr. Edward Baines, the respected member for Leeds, in a speech embodying all the arguments that ingenuity and imagination could suggest. He was answered by Sir George C. Lewis, the then Home Secretary. Sir George began by showing that all presumptions were in favour of a Religious Census —an accessory and assistance to good government which had found place in the general practice of civilised states; and he

gave reasons for believing that the difficulties which were apprehended would disappear in the face of a well-organised system of enumeration. Sir George Lewis, with a warmth unusual in him, contemptuously spurned the insinuation that the Religious Census would be perverted into a means of oppression through undue influence; he reproved the inconsistency with which the several sects protested against the record of their religious profession in the national census, while their very protests were made with an ostentatious display of their nonconformity; but he concluded by withdrawing the provision for the record of a Religious Profession. Lord Palmerston closed the discussion of the Dissenters' objections in these words: "We have deferred "to their feelings, but we cannot assent to their reasons." The same subserviency to Dissent was exhibited by the Government in 1870. The introduction of a return of Religious Professions into the Census Bill of 1870 was again opposed by Mr. Baines, who succeeded in negativing the proposal in the Commons. The House of Lords subsequently inserted a provision for taking a Census of Religions, but the clause was struck out by the Commons before they passed the Bill at the close of the Session on the 8th of August. There was little reason to expect that the Census Bill of 1880 would require a return of religious professions. The Liberation Society had issued its prohibition, and the Government of Mr. Gladstone were too considerate for the wishes of their Nonconformist friends to offend them by a discovery of truths vitally connected with the science of legislation, but dreaded for their exposure of statistical delusions. The Census Bills (which had they been earlier laid before the Commons would have provoked discussion) were prudently kept back till the last days of the Session, and the brief debate which then ensued was on the side of the Government confined to the assertion of two most inadequate objections to a Religious Census.

First, that the expense of the Census would be increased. Secondly, that the publication of the Census would be delayed. To the first objection it may be replied that the cost of an additional column to the form of return, and the consequent labour of filling it up, would be infinitesimally small compared

with the whole cost of the Census, and not for a moment to be weighed against the national utility of the information it would convey. To the second, the reply would be that a decennial Census is not like a weather forecast, whose virtue vanishes with every hour of delay in its publication, and that assuming the very problematical result of an appreciable delay, that delay would not impair the utility of the return for any practical purpose.

The complete indictment of a Religious Census is conspicuously set forth in the *Nonconformist* of the 29th of July, 1880, which reprints what it describes "as the excellent epitome "of objections published in a separate form by the Liberation "Society." This document, important as expressing the principles, convictions, and arguments of the Liberation Society, of the eminent Nonconformists who are members of the House of Commons, and of their ably conducted journal, shall be given *in extenso.*

Objections to a Census of Religious Profession.

1. *The inquiry is unwarrantable.* What right have Government officials to question us about our religious, any more than about our political professions? The only place where they can be legitimately elicited is in the polling booth.

2. *The inquiry is absurd, or unreasonable.* How can every hotel-keeper, every lodging-house keeper, every master, and every head of a hospital, or prison, or poor-house, make a truthful return of the religious profession of "every living person" who happens to have slept under a certain roof on a particular night? The inquiry would in many cases be resented as an impertinence, and if the facts were guessed at, instead of ascertained, they would frequently be, not facts, but fictions. It would be unjust to householders and inmates alike.

3. *The result would be misleading, because of the ambiguity of the inquiry.* What is "religious profession"? Is it what a man believes, or only what he professes, or what he says that he professes? Or if it means, what religious body does he belong to, what *is* belonging to a religious body? Then there are many persons who cannot really define their religious profession, and why should they be obliged to attempt to do so, or be punished if they refuse to make the attempt?

4. *The return would be incomplete,* because it is well known that a large number of persons would, on conscientious grounds, feel bound to refuse the information sought for, and many would refuse on other grounds. And if the enumerators attempted to supply it, they would inevitably blunder.

5. *The return would prove fallacious and grossly misleading.* Large masses of the people make no religious profession; but, because they will

not like to acknowledge the fact, they will reply, "Church of England." The effect would be to produce the impression that the Church of England has a far greater body of adherents than all the other religious bodies have, *and that is the object of the suggested Religious Census.* It is wished to use what would be really inaccurate, and in many cases dishonest returns, for a political purpose.

6. *The inquiry would lead to coercion and sectarian rivalry, and would occasion great bitterness of feeling.* Many of the Established clergy and their adherents would use all their influence to induce their dependents and the poor to return themselves as Churchmen, and numbers of persons would be too ignorant or too weak to resist such pressure.

7. *The inquiry would be contrary to the true purpose of a census.* That purpose is to obtain statistics which are likely to be accurate, and to ascertain facts which can be verified, and not opinions or professions which are necessarily vague and ambiguous, or unascertainable. A census of the population ought to be taken with the good will of the population: whereas such a Religious Census as is suggested would excite anger and resistance, and make the census odious to a large class of the people.

And now what are these objections worth? They shall be answered *seriatim.*

1. A government is warranted in requiring for the public advantage information which it may be irksome for individuals to give; but since a declaration of religious profession would necessarily be voluntary and uncontroverted, it could not involve any infringement of conscientious scruple.

2. Every householder could ask, and every adult inmate of every tenement could reply to, the question which concerns his religious profession. Parents would be responsible for their children.

3. The object of the inquiry is to ascertain every man's account of his religious profession if he has any. It is impossible to believe that men would wantonly and aimlessly misrepresent their profession, and still more to imagine that either intentional or casual errors could be so many as to affect the essential purpose of the inquiry.

4. A refusal on conscientious or capricious grounds to answer the inquiry might leave the return incomplete numerically as regards the entire population, but complete and exact as an exposition of the relative proportions of the several denominations.

5. If masses of the people choose to describe their religious profession as that of the Church of England, it would be the

height of tyranny to preclude their doing so. The objection foretells "that the effect (of the inquiry) would be to produce an "impression that the Church of England has a far greater body "of adherents than all the other bodies have." The prophecy is probably correct, and we have it here confessed that the objection of the Liberation Society to a *Religious Census* is that it would enable the majority of the English to declare themselves members of the Church of England.

6. Coercion, it is insinuated, can be exercised only by the clergy and their adherents; and, on the other hand, only the Dissenting poor are described as so weak and ignorant as to succumb to the influence which would be exercised to make them appear Churchmen. Instead of imagining this double slander, it would be wiser and truer to believe that Churchmen respect the convictions of those whom they employ, and that Englishmen, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, would scorn to dissemble their religious belief.

7. Certainly a Census should be taken with the good will of the population, and so it *would* be if they knew that its object was—not such as it is represented by the Liberation Society—but one aiming at the more just, more tolerant, more religious government of the whole nation. The Liberation Society allege, indeed, that although they have strenuously and successfully opposed a "Religious Profession" Census, they are heartily in favour of the "fullest and fairest Religious Census" in a repetition of that taken in 1851. Well, let us inquire into the so-called Religious Census of 1851.

When Sir Morton Peto brought forward his Burials Bill in 1861, he announced that he proposed that measure in the name of the majority of the English people. Challenged for his authority, he referred to the Religious Census of 1851. The book which he so designated is really entitled "Census of Great "Britain, 1851, Religious Worship," and in a note prefixed to the Report, Mr. Graham, the Registrar-General, addresses the Secretary of State for the Home Department thus: "My Lord,— "When the census of Great Britain was taken in 1851, I received "instructions from Her Majesty's Government to endeavour to "procure information as to the existing accommodation for public

"religious worship." Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the then Home Secretary, readily assented to a motion by a member of the House for a copy of the "instructions" referred to by the Registrar-General; but after some delay he informed his querist that "no copy of the instructions could be produced, for that no "such instructions existed." Mr. Graham could not of course have written as he did without some warrant, and the probability is that although no parliamentary authority had been given, yet that Lord Palmerston had verbally assented to the suggestion of his zealous subordinate. The ability with which Mr. Horace Mann performed the laborious task confided to him by the Registrar-General has never been doubted, but his Report upon "Religious Worship" is destitute of parliamentary sanction, and cannot be quoted as having official authority: its accuracy has been impugned, but it would be unreasonable to impute to dishonesty in the compiler errors attributable to deceitful materials.

Apart from any question as to Mr. Mann's use of the returns furnished to him, it is important carefully to scrutinise the nature of those returns, and the conclusions drawn from them for an object quite distinct from the purpose of the inquiry.

Mr. Mann's statistics profess to present returns of the number of churches and chapels, the number of sittings provided, and the number of attendants at public worship, on the Census Sunday, viz.:—

Accommodation for Worship.

	Buildings	Seats
Church of England	14,077	5,317,915
Nonconformist	20,399	4,894,648

Attendance at Worship (supplying by estimate defects in the Returns).

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Church of England . .	2,541,244	1,890,764	860,543
Nonconformists . .	2,106,238	1,293,371	2,203,906
	4,647,482	3,184,135	3,064,449

By assuming that, of the afternoon attendants, one half, and of the evening attendants, one third, had not been at the morning service, Mr. Mann obtains a total of

Worshippers in the Church of England . . .	3,773,474
Worshippers of other denominations	3,487,558

or in the proportion of fifty-two Churchmen to forty-eight Nonconformists. Upon these doubtful data the Liberation Society constructed their computations, eventuating in the discovery that Nonconformists constituted a majority of the people of England and Wales. To reach this result, some efforts of imagination became necessary. (1) The relative number of the adherents of the several denominations worshipping on a particular day was to be applicable as a scale for determining the denomination of all the rest of the population. (2) The asserted increase of Nonconformist chapels prior to 1851 was to be continuous subsequent to 1851.

(1) This assumption demands most careful scrutiny, seeing that Mr. Mann's figures include only 7,261,032, and that the population was 18,000,000. How are the ten millions and more, who were not at chapel or church on Census Sunday, to be dealt with? Are they to be scored off as of no religion, or be apportioned by the simple operation of a rule-of-three amongst the one hundred and odd denominations tabulated by Mr. Mann? Neither course would be satisfactory. There must be many thousands of those who did not worship publicly on Census Sunday who would still be quite prepared to declare their religious profession; while, again, an arithmetical distribution of the non-worshippers would yield a most fallacious impression of the convictions or preferences personally entertained.

Nonconformity, or separation from the Church, is in its origin an evidence of spiritual activity, and its existence is for the most part accompanied by earnestness and resolution in the public discharge of religious duties. When men become separatists from the denomination of which they have been members, they are, by the very freshness of their engagements, inspired with zeal and perseverance for their punctual fulfilment; and thus, as a rule, the newer the sect, the larger will be the proportion of its members attending its public services. The Wesleyans, as one of the newest and most vigorous denominations, would naturally have been represented at their services on Census Sunday in larger proportions than the Established Church. Mr. Voysey's followers, to take a very novel sect, might almost all be worshipping in Langham Hall, but it would be unwarrant-

able to assume that for every seven persons counted there, eleven others elsewhere would own him as their pastor.

(2) The Liberation Society affirm that Nonconformity, in the number of its places of worship and its worshippers, has grown much faster than the Church since 1851. No authentic information exists which can justify this conclusion, but such as it has offered may advantageously be considered. Mr. H. Mann extended his inquiry retrospectively from 1851 to the commencement of the century, but the data at his command were imperfect and unreliable, and he frankly offers the results with serious misgiving. The Nonconformists, however, pursued a mode of computation so flattering to their own progress, and instituted in the years 1872, 1873, through their own agents, an inquiry, embracing, it is true, only some 141 towns, but establishing upon the statistics thus obtained, as to both church and chapel, a result, out of 100 sittings, of 41·2 provided by the Church, and of 58·8 provided by Nonconformists —the numerical increase of sittings being, for the Church, 293,493; for Nonconformists, 621,699; and upon the strength of this statement Nonconformists assert that "there is ample "ground for concluding that the Established Church of England "and Wales is now the Church of a decided minority of the "population."

The information on which this momentous declaration is hazarded has been often found so gravely inaccurate, that no confidence can be placed on the conclusions to which it leads; the individual details are beyond the reach of private investigation, bnt the conclusions can be dealt with upon independent, but thoroughly authentic evidence.

In 1851 Mr. Mann estimated the accommodation for religious worship to be:—

	Buildings	Sittings
Church of England	14,077	5,317,915
Other denominations	20,390	4,894,648

The yearly accession of Dissenting chapels to the registered list may be counted by hundreds. In 1875 it was 534, in 1876 it was 543. How is it, therefore, that the number from time to time is widely fluctuating, and that in the register, on 31st of December, 1878, it is only 19,977? The explanation

is to be found in the circumstance that Dissenters' chapels have no permanent character. Being unconsecrated and unassociated with any religious sentiment, the bulk of them can be treated as interest and convenience dictate. They may be diverted to purely secular uses, or their temporary hire for religious worship may be discontinued. Of Nonconformist chapels there were—

Registered on the 1st of January, 1875	19,946
The additions registered in 1875 were	534
" " " 1876 "	543
Which would have raised the number on 1st of January, 1877, to	21,023
But that the expurgation of the register which takes place from time to time led to the excision in 1876 of .	1,959
Leaving an effective total of	19,064

(or 1,326 less than the number stated by Mr. Mann, and adopted by the Liberation Society in 1851. What solution of this discrepancy is to be accepted? (1) Must Mr. Mann's estimate be admitted to be an exaggeration, and so discrediting all the statistical computations founded on it? or (2) Must the Registrar-General's Report of 1877 force upon us the conviction that Nonconformity, as exhibited in the number of its places of worship, has decreased since 1851?*)

The obscurity attending the consideration of these questions can be materially dissipated by a study of the "List of "Places of Meeting for Religious Worship" certified to the "Registrar-General, and on the Register of the 31st of March, "1876." The total remaining on the Register is given at 18,723, and as the number of chapels once registered exceeds 22,750, it follows that more than 4,000 must have been struck off at various revisions. Nor is it wonderful that this necessity should have arisen, when the character of the buildings registered for religious services is scrutinised, including as they do: "School "rooms," "music-halls," "amphitheatres," "vestries," "temperance halls," "occupied houses," "rooms in a house," "cottages," "club-rooms," "railway arches," "bakehouses,"

* *Vide* remarks in Preface on this paragraph.

"malt-kilns," "town halls," &c., &c. A selection from the list itself will faithfully illustrate the varied and ephemeral nature of these "places of public worship." The page of the Blue Book is prefixed to the description of the certified meeting-place.

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6. A dwelling-house in the occupation of John Poor, labourer, Old Park, near Bramdean.
16. A room in a house belonging to Mr. R. S. Boyt (Uxbridge), Subscription Reading-room, Lyme-Regis.
23. Loft belonging to Robert Roe, Lynton.
24. Primitive Methodist preaching-room, owned by Henry Nuttall, Esq. (Barkby).
27. "The Room" in the occupation of Henry George Childs (Milbury Osmond).
30. Club-room, Pelican Inn, New Town, Ebbw Vale.
33. Nos. 75 and 76 Railway Arches, under the Eastern Counties Railway, North Street, Bethnal Green.
    Amicable Hall.
    Christian Community Memorial Hall.
    People's Hall.
    Albion Grammar School.
42. Great and Little Bolton Co-operative Hall.
44. Boston Sunday School Union School-room.
46. Hall of Freedom.
52. A dwelling known by the name of Benjamin Wilkins's Dwelling-House, Chilton Polden.
54. People's Hall.
    Assembly Rooms.
    Bethel Arch.
    Royal British Schools.
56. Assembly Rooms, Fox and Goose Inn, Redditch.
62. Girls' British School in the rear of the Church.
68. Bakehouse attached to the dwelling-house of Mr. Jacob Crabb.
100. Noah's Ark.
124. New Public Hall, Godalming.
133. Mr. Tanner's Lecture Room, Bohemia Mews, Hastings.
143. Royal Amphitheatre, 85 High Holborn.
    Doughty Hall, 14 Bedford Row.
    Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Islington, a hall owned by Mr. John Stabb.
166. Gladstone Music Hall (Leicester).
184. Buildings in the occupation of Hezekiah Kitchmaid.
233. Black Horse Inn Long Room, Reading.
    Foresters' Assembly Rooms, Reading.
243. Co-operative Assembly Rooms, Delph.
    A wooden movable building owned by Mr. Edwin Austin, farmer (Little Bride, Rye, Kent).

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245. Justice Room, back of the Porcupine Inn, Tywordoeath.
248. The Great Hall of Freemasons' Tavern, London.
Royal Music Hall, Holborn, London.
249. The Ark, Victoria Rooms.
350. A Railway Arch, Walworth.
Ten buildings in the occupation of Joseph Floyd at Mirfield, Ossett, Thornhill Lees, Ossett Common, Gawthorpe, Chickenly, Whitley, Thornhill, Briestfield, Batley Carr, all in Dewsbury Union.

These extracts suffice to indicate how widely consecrated Churches are distinguished by their immutability from the registered buildings, and how impossible it is to construct from numbers alone any comparison of the position and progress of the Church and of Dissenters.

As regards the mere fabrics, the cost of the National Churches far exceeds that of Dissenting Chapels, although of late, as regards these last, a great advance must have been observed in their solidity, their constructional excellence, and their architectural propriety. "Steeple-houses" is no longer the nickname of National Churches, and the most rigid ecclesiologist might be satisfied with the externals, at all events, of many a Nonconformist Chapel. The contrast between the conditions on which the National Churches and Nonconformist buildings are respectively constituted and utilised is very striking. A consecrated Church must be free from debt, it must, under certain Acts, be endowed with 5,000*l.*, and the property must be permanently vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. A Dissenting Chapel may be built with borrowed money, and be mortgaged for its full value; it may be hired for purposes of worship exclusively, or for worship alternately with any other purposes, however secular. The economy of this community of use is obvious, and no less is the vantage ground which it provides for the display of Nonconformist statistics. A Church with 1,000 seats may have cost 10,000*l.*, and the endowment raises the outlay to 15,000*l.*, but a lecture-room or music-saloon with the same capacity may be hired for the whole or part of Sunday, and besides the rent, the only condition needful to ensure its registration is a fee of 2*s.* 6*d.*

The Sunday rent of the Islington Agricultural Hall would be trivial compared with its capacity, but what a masterly stroke

of policy to balance by a fee of half-a-crown the vast area of the Agricultural Hall registered as "a place of meeting for "public worship" against the spacious and solemn nave of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Although the fee for registering a meeting-house for worship is only 2*s.* 6*d.*, its registration as licensed for the celebration of marriages costs 3*l.* Of Chapels now licensed for marriages there are 8,413, including probably the more important and durable buildings, so that there are more than 10,000 for which this privilege of performing marriages has not been provided. Such are the characteristics of the so-called "Religious Census" of 1851, a repetition of which the Nonconformists anxiously desire.

Nonconformists invite us, indeed, in an apologetic strain to admit that imperfect as the inquiry of 1851 may be, "it is still "to be accepted as the best system attainable." Churchmen distinctly decline this admission, and they point to the "per-"sonal religious profession" as the only honest, truthful, accurate mode of attaining the desired end. The opportunity for that really effective inquiry unfortunately cannot recur for another ten years, but it is quite possible to adduce evidence official and unimpeachable, which, although indirect, is quite appropriate.

We turn for a part of our denominational statistics to the year 1870. Owing to the subsequent fusion of denominations in School Boards, that is the latest date at which would be found official returns of the religious classification of the children attending primary schools. In the year 1870, according to the Report of the Education Department, there were under inspection in primary schools 1,434,765 children, of whom 72·6 per 100 were in Church schools.

Of 190,054 marriages in 1878,* 72·6 per 100 were of the Church.

Of 32,361 seamen and mariners employed in 1875, the percentage of Churchmen was 75·5.†

The army of 183,024 men, having in 1870 as many as 24·0

* Registrar-General's 41st Report. † P. 132, September, 1876.

per 100 Roman Catholics, still showed a proportion of Churchmen equal to 62·5 per cent.*

Of 101,458 adult inmates of workhouses in 1875, the proportion of Church people was 79 per cent.†

Of 22,677 prisoners in gaol in 1867, the proportion returned as Churchmen was 75 per 100.‡

The number of Nonconformist Chapels supplied to Mr. Mann contrasts strangely with the number of "Ministers" recorded in the enumerated Professions of the Official Census of 1851. In that Report the Clergy of the Church are stated at 17,320, and the Ministers of all other denominations at 8,658.

One expects to find some proportion between the number of the shepherds and the number of the folds into which they gather their sheep; but while the Clergy considerably exceeded in number the Churches in which they officiated, Nonconformist ministers of all sects do not in number equal one-half of the buildings for worship which are said to have been provided for them and are appealed to as an evidence of progress.

The official statistics quoted above challenge attention, not by their numerical magnitude, but by their authenticity and their appositeness as a reliable test within the respective spheres of observation, and the very diversity of their origin strengthens the conclusion that a genuine Census of Religions would record about one-fourth of the people of England and Wales as alien from the National Church.

Some of these statements, when referred to in the House of Commons, provoked a very amusing commentary from Mr. Bright.

Mr. Bright had been assuming, as usual, that Nonconformity could claim more than half the people of England, and when checked by a reference to these returns, including those from gaols and workhouses, he rejoined: "Oh, I do not deny that the "great majority in gaols and workhouses are members of the "Established Church." The reply was ready, clever, and telling, and it came with especial appropriateness from Mr. Bright, whose pre-eminently respectable "Society of Friends" would

* P. 170, September 1871. † P. 257, September 1876.
‡ P. 284 September 1868.

probably not find a "Quaker" in either gaol or workhouse, for the best of all reasons—an erring Friend would have been excommunicated before he could reach either of those destinations. With an admirable charity, the "Society of Friends" supports its members when impoverished through misfortune, and with inflexible discipline it pronounces the expulsion of those who "walk disorderly" long before the Friend becomes a criminal. Accidents, however, will happen in the best societies, and there is on record one instance of a Quaker being hanged for murder.

But how does Mr. Bright's pleasantry leave the question as a serious consideration for statesmen? Can the millions of non-worshippers on Census Sunday be ignored in legislation? Have they no rights, no claims upon the State, upon the Church, upon their fellow-countrymen of all denominations? These claims may be disregarded by some of the sects; they certainly are not by all; they certainly are not by the Church; and assuredly the people's right to declare their own religious profession is one which ought to be respected. How can it best be ascertained? By arbitrary inferences? from statements unauthorised in their origin, and irrelevant in their character? or by the simple process of giving to every man the opportunity of declaring voluntarily the denomination to which he belongs? That such a personal profession must be voluntary is obvious, for there can be no means of enforcing it, and any but a spontaneous profession would be worse than useless. As much or more than any other inquiry, that of religious profession should be free and truthful, and the character of the census is perverted when its results can be presented only as statistics of devotions. What, then, are the opposing views of Churchmen and Nonconformists touching a Religious Census? The Liberation Society shall explain their own. In their epitome already quoted, they say, "The effect would be to produce the impression "that the Church of England has a far greater body of adherents "than all the other religious bodies have, and *that is the object* "*of the suggested Religious Census.* It is wished to use what "would really be inaccurate, and in many cases, dishonest returns "for a political purpose."

The general objects of a Religious Census in the view of Churchmen are clearly stated in the passage from Mr. Mann's Report prefixed to this paper. *Political purpose they have none.* Religious liberty with Churchmen of the present day is not a phrase, and they contend that, whether Nonconformists were proved by a Religious Census to be fewer than a quarter, or more than half the population, they are equally entitled to the fullest measure of liberty of conscience, liberty of worship, and to personal equality before the law. Churchmen cherish no enmity and design no injury to Dissenters, but they would seriously deprecate and resolutely oppose political movements tending to damnify the national religion. The immediate and direct purpose of Churchmen in asking for a true Religious Census was undoubtedly to demolish by positive evidence the delusive statistics unwarrantably grafted upon Mr. Mann's Report. Independently of a love of truth and thirst for knowledge, they wished to arrest the mischief which has been elaborated from that greatly misused publication. The capricious manipulation of Mr. Mann's figures would have been harmless enough, had they not led (borrowing the phrase from the *Liberator*) "to inaccurate returns used for a political purpose," and the fabrication of deceptive computations to the detriment of the Church. Ever since 1860 Burials Bills have been presented to the House of Commons as measures promoted in the interest of a Nonconformist majority of the people of England, and every legislative measure bearing on the national religion has been offered for discussion under the same false colours. State departments, and the commissions connected with them, exhibited the effects of this sinister prepossession, especially conspicuous in the proceedings of the Education Department, the Charity Commissioners, and the Endowed Schools Commission. The operation of this sentiment is aptly illustrated by a letter to the *Times* of the 15th of May, 1875, from Mr. Roby, the able Secretary and inspiring genius of the Endowed Schools Commission. Mr. Roby, writing in disapproval of the scheme proposed for Crewkerne Grammar School, "protests against ticketing national institutions with "the symbols of what is now the faith of only half the nation."

If statesmen and influential officials like Mr. Roby can imagine the nationality of the Church of England to depend upon her outnumbering 150 sects, it is not surprising that the Liberation Society, in the name of the more aggressive of those sects, should strain every nerve to exhibit a preponderance of numbers adverse to the Church; for on their success in obtaining a general belief in that assumption depends, as they think, their crowning victory in the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church.

This is not the place for discussing the conditions which would eventuate in Disestablishment, but it may be easily shown that Disestablishment can be no necessary result of a nice numerical comparison between Churchmen and the aggregation of dissentients. If any one of the sects attained a larger following than the Church, it might, by a general concensus, supersede it as the expression of the religious profession of the country, and take its place in the Constitution; but short of such transposition, the perpetuation of the Monarchy involves the perpetuation of the National Church, with which it has been welded by statute with the special object of "securing our "religion, laws, and liberties."

Disestablishment, the indispensable precursor of "religious "equality" (a phrase which, if it differs in meaning from "re-"ligious liberty," means "equality of religions"), may or may not enter into the category of the practical subjects of the day; but a course of policy injurious to the National Church, to its rights of property, and to its religious liberty, has been pursued for some years, prompted and promoted by the allegation "that "the Church, being outnumbered by the sects, was no longer "the National Church."

The allegation that a majority of the people were strange to the Church would not, even if true, justify the purpose to which it was applied; but being wholly destitute of proof, it has, nevertheless, been allowed to vitiate legislation and prejudice the administration of the law in matters which concerned religion and education.

The "irrevocable past" stands but too frequently pointing to opportunities neglected, and to years which in their recurrent

cycles offered again and again a power of doing wisely and justly, to be again and again misused. Another decade must pass before a truer liberality on the part of those who profess to be Liberals, or greater courage and independence of party in the Government of the day, permits the realisation of a Religious Census for England. In the interval it cannot be unreasonable to express a hope that the Queen's Ministers (whoever they may be) will no longer permit the laws of England to be moulded and administered under the influence of a gross misrepresentation of the religious profession of the people.

NOTE.—The Census of Ireland has a column for those who decline to declare their religious profession, and the same provision occurs in the Census Tables of each of the Colonies.

It never was intended in an English Census to coerce people to a declaration of their faith.

DENOMINATIONAL WORSHIP.

Mr. C. S. Miall had the privilege of promulgating through the columns of the *Times* of 26th December last the discoveries touching attendance at Church and Chapel which he had already confided to the readers of the *Nonconformist and Independent*, and to them he has, in his paper of 2nd February, 1882, communicated the more complete results of an inquiry into the accommodation for, and the attendance at, religious worship in seventy towns with a population of 3,629,200. His conclusions are, that of that population a percentage of 29·5 only attended public worship, and that of the 1,062,521 so attending, 38·66 per cent. attended the services of the Church of England, and 61·34 per cent. those of all other religious bodies.

As an indication that a very large portion of the population attend no religious service, these statements confirm what was already a sadly notorious fact, and they show that the past efforts of all religious bodies have failed to accomplish the evangelisation of the masses.

But is this the only or the chief conclusion to which these private statistics are meant to lead? Mr. Miall is explicit on this point. He states very frankly in his letter to the *Times*:—"The meaning (of these figures) is that the Church of England "in a numerical sense is no longer the 'National Church.'" This seems a very formidable sentence, but the premises are questionable, and have no necessary connection with the conclusion.

How does Mr. Miall prove that the Church of England embraces only a minority of the population? His statistics, if correct, record that in seventy towns, out of 3,629,200 persons, 1,062,521 attended public worship, and that of them only 410,770 attended the Church services; but of the uncounted

25,000,000 in England and Wales we have no record, and it is out of all reason to suppose that questions of general and deep importance could be solved by such a fractional investigation, even though it were thoroughly pertinent. Statistics bearing on public interests should, when they are not official, be supplied through a medium strictly impartial and disinterested, but what is the origin and history of this movement?

Mr. Edward Miall, once M.P. for Bradford, came to London in 1841, and founded the *Nonconformist* newspaper with the avowed object of enlisting public feeling, especially among Dissenters, in favour of the separation of Church and State. Mr. Miall soon gathered around him a vigorous school of what have been designated "political Dissenters," and, mainly as the result of his teaching, the British Anti-State Church Association was formed in 1843, which still exists under the more familiar title of the "Liberation Society." During his exclusion from Parliament, Mr. Miall took a foremost part in the movement for the abolition of Church Rates, and lived to see all of what were called "Dissenters' grievances" removed. Twice when in Parliament Mr. Miall moved a resolution in favour of the disestablishment of the English Church. During his public career Mr. Miall twice received from his many friends substantial marks of their appreciation of his services. In 1863 he was presented with five thousand guineas, and in 1870 the sum of ten thousand guineas was put in trust on behalf of himself and his family. (*Times*, May 2, 1881.)

About six years before his death, he transferred the editorship of the *Nonconformist* to his younger brother, Mr. Charles S. Miall, who has shown no lack of zeal in the cause in which his brother's services were so highly appreciated. In 1873 he published in the *Nonconformist* returns of religious accommodation in 125 cities and boroughs—it having fallen to his lot to procure, arrange, and defend a huge mass of statistics, and now he assumes the task of summarising the returns which have appeared from time to time in local newspapers for the information of the public.

Does not this retrospect forcibly suggest that Mr. Miall's paramount object has been, and is, the Disestablishment of

the Church, and that the labours of the last thirty years have been, as he thinks, crowned by the discovery that, according to computations founded upon private observation of dominical devotions, the Church of England is in a numerical minority, and so, *in a numerical sense*, ceases to be the National Church? Even in this qualified sense Mr. Miall is penetrated with the gravity of the situation; he knows that he is verging on a burning question, but, rightly thinking that it is best for all parties "that the real truth should be known," he delivers himself of his portentous verdict—"the Church of England in "a numerical sense is no longer the 'National Church;'" and then continues, "I do not ask further space to comment on this "suggestive fact." How disappointing! It was really cruel of Mr. Miall thus to keep in suspense the hopes of his allies and the fears of timorous Churchmen, and not, at all events, to have distinctly stated whether the assumed numerical defect was of itself fatal to the Church's pretensions. But, indeed, if it were not so considered, there would be no point in his hesitating approach to "a burning question;" there would have been no pretence for delaying the further "comment on a suggestive "fact" in the disclosure of a scheme for the disruption of the Church.

Before leaving Mr. Miall's Survey and Summary of Dominical Devotions, which he offers as a sequel to what he calls "the Religious Census of 1851," but which is really entitled "Census of Religious Worship," I refer to what I have said at pp. 10, 11 of this Paper as to the character of that publication. Mr. Mann never ascribed to his inquiry the purpose ascribed to it by Mr. Miall. In his letters to the *Times* of July 1860 and July 1870 Mr. Mann declared that "there was no intention "or attempt to enumerate the adherents of different denomina-"tions;" "no attempt to estimate the comparative numerical "strength of different religious communions;" and he deprecated the "fallacious deductions" which might be drawn from a perverted use of his returns.

The fallacious deductions deprecated by Mr. Mann, by Lord Palmerston, and by Sir G. C. Lewis, unite in the portentous discovery trumpeted by Mr. C. Miall.

No such statistics as either Mr. Mann's or Mr. Miall's can affect the title of the Church of England to be called National. Mr. Miall remarks that the accuracy of the statistics he summarises has "not been challenged." The answer is obvious. They are irrelevant to the great issue he would found upon them. If the nationality of the Church depended purely upon numbers, where shall the test line be drawn? Mr. Miall would draw it at 50 per cent., and if the numbering of the people yielded a return of 49 per cent. of Churchmen, he declares the Church to be no longer National. The only truly National Church must, on the consideration of numbers, be one in which Church and State effectually combine to repress every deviation of religious teaching, and tolerate no exception from the public worship of the Church. Such a Church in this country we may find in the days of Mary and Elizabeth: does Mr. Miall regret those days? I confess that I do not, and that I prize religious liberty as a boon not to be outweighed by the agitation of even 150 sects.

The inferences drawn, whether from Mr. Mann's or Mr. Miall's returns, as to the relative adherents of Church and Dissent, are quite irreconcilable with the evidence adduced at pp. 17, 18 from official statistics. These returns show a percentage of 72·5 Churchmen against 27·5 Nonconformists of all sects; and if gaols, workhouses, and schools are slightingly spoken of as comprising the lower and poorer classes, the same exception cannot be taken to marriages, which, applying to all classes, show similar proportions, or to the London "Sunday Hospital" receipts, which in 1881 showed that Church congregations have contributed rather more than three-fourths of the whole amount (£22,863 out of £30,147).

Nonconformists question these proportions, and ask exultingly: Why, if Churchmen are three to one, have they been defeated over and over again in Parliament on Church Rates, Burial Bills, &c., &c.? The answer is obvious: the House of Commons includes not only 493 English members, but 60 Scotch and 105 Irish, and both Scotch and Irish members do generally vote with the political Dissenters. Upon the results of a personal Census Mr. Miall has no doubt it would exhibit a decided preponderance in the number of Churchmen. "The

"result cannot for a moment be doubted;" but the result, he implies, would have been obtained by the tyrannical influence of Churchmen. Surely undue influence is not more to be feared from Churchmen, who act purely on the defensive, than from Dissenters, vigorously aggressive, who have for their object the disruption of the Church. They have held that a Church which has ceased to be co-extensive with the Nation has ceased to be the National Church, and Mr. Miall has thought, by exhibiting its numerical proportion reduced to less than a moiety, to obtain an acceptance of his theory, and compensation to his zealous toils.

It will be disappointing to Mr. Miall that his theory has not met with the reception he anticipated. To comprise within its folds the majority of the people is not the sole nor the chief title of a Church to be designated National. A Church becomes National when the nation wills it so to be, and the nation's will finds unmistakable expression in its laws. A single illustration shall suffice, and I borrow it from Mr. V. Harcourt's speech on Mr. E. Miall's motion for disestablishment on the 16th May, 1873, when he designated that motion "as being in effect "a proposal to overturn the entire fabric of the Constitution, "resting, as it did, on the Act for the further Limitation of the "Crown (Act 12, 13 Will. III. c. 2, A.D. 1700), which ran in "these terms: 'Whereas it is requisite and necessary that some "further provision be made for securing our religious laws and "liberties . . . be it enacted, That whosoever shall come to "the possession of this Crown shall join in communion with the "Church of England as by law established.' Arguing the "question on political grounds, not because he undervalued its "religious aspect, but because the former seemed most appro-"priate for discussion in this House, he had a right to ask "whether the hon. member meant to maintain the Protestant "settlement of the Crown. If so, how did he mean to reconcile "it with those docrines of religious equality upon which he had "enlarged? To confine the Crown to a particular form of "religious opinion was a clear violation of the principles he had "laid down."

If Sir William Harcourt's opinion of 1873 is sound—and I

cannot doubt it—Mr. Miall must really resign himself to leaving the Church of England in possession of her nationality. Is that an intolerable grievance? I trust not. I have already noticed how Mr. Edward Miall was credited last year with having outlived all "Dissenters' grievances." His biographer must have overlooked the "National Church," which still survives, and while this country is a Monarchy, will still live on. The late Sir Charles Reed, on his return from the United States—the land of "religious equality"—complained that in England he was *a Dissenter*; in America he said there were no Dissenters. Let this remark indicate the hopelessness of the cry of "religious equality" which is now echoed through the Nonconformist camp. The cry used to be 'religious liberty,' but religious liberty has been obtained, and is now enjoyed to the full. Upright Nonconformists, like Mr. S. Morley, admit that they possess absolute liberty, and have no grievance. So the cry is "religious equality," which, if it means other than religious liberty, means equality of religions, and such a cry cannot be satisfied while we maintain a constitutional Monarchy, under which the people enjoy perfect freedom in their civil and religious concerns. It remains for Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society to determine whether they will continue to agitate for the realisation of an impossibility, or desperately seek to reach the "religious equality" they covet through the destructive ordeal of a revolution.

Eminent Protestant Dissenters have already certified their disinterestedness by proclaiming that on no account would they consent to occupy the position of a State Church. Thus forewarned, we are able the more clearly to discern that the alternative to a Sovereign in communion with the Church of England must be a Republic.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH.

Churchmen will be always ready and resolute in defending "the "religious laws and liberties" of their country, but as their attitude is purely defensive, they desire neither to irritate nor injure those whose assaults they must repel. The Church of England maintains the true faith consistently with a charitable toleration of systems which she must deem doctrinally imperfect, and Churchmen holding her system to be most favourable to the nurture of social and spiritual excellence, can yet gratefully acknowledge the zealous exertions of those, who with fewer advantages have honestly laboured for the higher interests of the people in quarters where the ancient endowments of the Church have proved inadequate to provide for our rapidly progressive population.

Churchmen are reproached with standing aloof in haughty isolation, instead of realising a true Christian brotherhood in a fraternity of all denominations. They may reply that this isolation is due, not to political or social, but to doctrinal causes which Dissenters themselves consider serious enough to justify their separation, and that religious work cannot be carried on in common where there are grave differences as to the nature and substance of religious truth. Still, so long as a religious work conduces to God's glory in teaching men to live honestly, purely, and peaceably, we wish it success, and ask in return for nothing but fair treatment.

Mr. C. Miall's paper of 6th January, 1881, concludes an article on a Religious Census in these words:—

"A State Church which has practically alienated two-thirds "of the community has forfeited its claim to the title of "National Church, and no arithmetical shams or Jesuitical "wiles will henceforth be permitted either to arrest its downfall "or avert its final doom."

The many pleas involved in this virulent impeachment may be for judicial consideration separately stated, and without reference to the offensive expletives.

The Liberation Society's charge involves these propositions:—

(*a*) The Church of England is the creation of the State; the Clergy are the servants of the State; the regulation of the faith and worship of the Church is a function of the State.

(*b*) The property and revenues of the Church have been supplied by the State, and may be repossessed by the State, to be dealt with at its discretion as national property and revenues.

(*c*) The Church of England having failed in its mission of evangelising the nation, forfeits its title to be considered National, and must be disestablished and disendowed.

To this indictment counter-propositions may be offered in the followiug series:—

(*a*) The Church of England owns Christ only as her Head, and her members submit to her authority as derived from her Divine Founder. In civil matters Churchmen own obedience to the law of the State. In spiritual matters they are bound by the law of "this Church and Realm," but to any authority asserted by the State alone in matters touching faith and doctrine they owe no submission. The Clergy exercise their sacred duties within the districts prescribed to them, under the sanction of the State.

(*b*) The property and revenues of the Church were given and assigned to her use for God's service by Christian rulers and their subjects. As every Englishman may attend public worship and has a claim upon the ministrations of the Church, the Church is called National. Her property and revenues are National in their religious purpose, and may be dealt with in concert by the authorities in Church and State, the better to adapt them to their purpose of evangelizing the people.

(*c*) The Nationality of the Church, as representing the religious profession of the Sovereign and of the people, cannot be nullified by arithmetical computations of the extent to which.

in the exercise of religious liberty, individuals may have separated themselves from her communion.

Without entering here upon the discussion of the conflicting propositions, it may suffice to insist that whether the views of Churchmen be admitted as accurate or not by their opponents, they have a right to hold them, and to decline even to entertain the consideration of changes which would be fatal to their conception of a Divine institution.

For example, the Nonconformist ingenuously records his aspiration for a disestablishment, which should "require the "State to regard all ministers of all denominations, including "Episcopalians, *as laymen*, having their professional but no "spiritual character;" *i.e.*, he invites, on the part of the State, an act which ignorantly or tyrannically would falsify the whole history of Christendom, and revolt millions (not Anglicans only) who believe in Christ as the Head and Founder of the Church, and as the enduring source of its authority and life.

The practical question which has been raised can, however, be considered without any far-reaching or abstruse investigations.

The origin of the Church's property has been vigorously contested, and history has been lavishly quoted to prove that the State gave it and that the State may take it away. Upon this particular question I will adduce from my own knowledge illustrations, limited indeed, but thoroughly pertinent, as types of both ancient and modern endowments. In the Clergy List my name may be seen mentioned as the patron of two livings. One is the Rectory of Addington, the parish of my country home; the other is the Vicarage of St. Alban, Holborn.

Robert Fitz Barnard, A.D. 1222, gave the advowson of St. Mary's, Addington, to the Priory of St. John, Jerusalem. The Priors of that Convent presented a Rector to the charge of the parish until, upon the dissolution of the monasteries, the patronage of the Rectory and the ownership of the estate became vested in the same lord of the manor, and they have so continued. Each Rector of Addington has been in his turn the life owner of the benefice into which he has been inducted when instituted by the Bishop at the presentation of the Patron, and subject to the condition of his ministering to the spiritual

wants of the parishioners in accordance with the laws and ordinances of the Church. The tithe (taken in kind at first, and subsequently commuted for land or rent charge under various statutes) has been ever recognised by the law and secured for the sustenance of the Clergy and the satisfaction of the spiritual necessities of the people.

St. Alban's is the name of a Church in Holborn, erected in 1862, and to the charge of which, with a legally assigned district of some 8,000 souls, a Minister was, upon my nomination, appointed by the Bishop of London. The annual endowment of the church was, as required by the Church Building Act, £150, and I attached to it a clergy house and some adjacent property, which may raise the value of the benefice to near £300 a year. In return for this modest provision the Vicar of St. Alban's and his curates spend their lives in the discharge of their ministerial duties. The inhabitants of the district know that the Church is ever freely open to them for worship and instruction, and that they have a right to seek the ministrations of the Clergy without the risk of a refusal.

The parish churches of St. Mary's, Addington, and of St. Alban's, Holborn, are but examples of the way in which the ancient and modern ecclesiastical cures of the Church of England originated. To their construction and to their revenues neither the people locally interested nor the nation at large ever contributed one farthing. The great bulk of the Church revenues, and the construction of its sacred buildings and parsonages, were provided in the same manner. The State has at times made grants for Church building, and Mr. Frederick Martin gives at £1,663,429 the amount of State grants between 1801 and 1851. Earlier than this century, he tells us, "the aid of the State had not been given to any large extent." "During the reign of Charles II., of William III., and of Anne, "various Statutes provided for the erection of Churches, but they "were mostly confined to the metropolis, and were of limited "extent." In the same work, Mr. Martin states the annual value of the possessions and revenues of the Church at six millions, and its capital value at not less than one hundred millions sterling.*

* "The Property and Revenues of the English Church Establishment."

Whether this vast property should be called National depends on the sense in which that term is defined. Personally, I do not scruple to call it National, as the Church itself is National, and I look to its future immunity from plunder or secularisation, not to any theory which might abstract it from the reach of Parliament, but to the wisdom and integrity of our rulers. Out of the means which He had given me, I dedicated to God a House of Prayer, to the free use for ever of Christ's poor. Had I entrusted my offering to the Congregational Union, to the Roman Catholic Committee, or to the Wesleyan Conference, its religious dedication for the benefit of either of those communities would, I am assured, under any contingency, have been inviolate. Shall it then be insecure because for the benefit of the whole nation it has been intrusted to the guardianship of the State? Shall God be robbed and the poor despoiled by the Imperial Legislature? I reject such a monstrous supposition. I believe in the Divine mission of the Church of England; I lament the defects (quite removable) which impair her action; but I am persuaded that she has laboured, and will continue to labour effectively, in God's service; and I committed my humble offering to the Church to the protection of my fellow-countrymen, with implicit confidence in the justice of their decision upon any case which is truthfully presented to them.

The Liberation Society, in their recent scheme, suggest that modern churches and modern endowments (created since 1818) may be restored to their donors or their representatives, or should become the property of the congregations; but this disposition to disgorge the newer portion of the plunder is obviously prompted by the policy of sacrificing a portion of the plunder, the better to secure possession of the residue.

The argument that the State gave, and that the State can therefore take away, the ancient endowments of the Church, has no foundation, if it imply that the endowments were provided by the State out of the taxation of the people. Mr. Edward Miall, in his book, "Title Deeds of the Church of England," concludes (p. 113): "What is usually called Church property—at any "rate, all that portion of it which consists in tithes or rent

"charges—was originally created by public law;" or (p. 6), is "the product of public law exclusively;" and if this be true, it is "national property," and may be dealt with by the State at its discretion.

Mr. E. Miall quotes, "as constituting the basis of the "tithe system in England," a law of Ethelwulf (A.D. 855), in which he says: "I grant as an offering to God . . . and the "blessed Virgin and all the Saints, a certain portion of my "kingdom, to be held by perpetual rights, that is to say, the "tenth part thereof . . . . to be applied only to the service "of God alone." In this document Mr. E. Miall finds the foundation of the civil rights of the clergy to tithes in England; and he supports his affirmation that tithe arose not from "the "exercise of individual liberality," but from an enactment of public law, by reciting subsequent royal laws of the same character; by King Edmund in 944, by King Edgar in 967, and by King Ethelred in 1012; the latter containing these words: "We command that every man, for the love of God, "shall pay his Church scot and his full tithe . . . that is, that "he pay for tithe every tenth acre that the plough shall go "over. And every other customary due must be paid to the "Mother Church to which every man belongs, for the love of "God. *And let no man take from God what belongs to God,* "*and which our predecessors have consecrated to Him.*" ("Title Deeds," p. 24.)

Mr. E. Miall then informs us: "That after the conquest "of England by William of Normandy, he re-enacted the laws "by which the kingdom had been governed in the reign of "Edward the Confessor, thus constituting the foundation of "the 'Common Law' of England. Amongst them is one for "payment of tithe." These laws William's successors were sworn to maintain and observe, and thus there is on record the "evidence of 400 years that the public law of England, and not "the private liberality of individuals, created the tithe system "for the maintenance of the Clergy." ("Title Deeds," p. 26.)

Laboriously Mr. E. Miall applied himself to disprove the individual spontaneity of the origin of tithes, and not less earnestly he insisted that the repeated interference of the State,

enforcing, regulating, assigning, and commuting tithe, established its right to deal with Church endowments as with a property which it had created, had never wholly parted with, and could therefore reassume and dispose of at its discretion. Mr. E. Miall fails to establish this proposition.

Whether in any, or every ecclesiastical endowment, the donor, or lord of the manor upon whose property it was charged, was moved by an instinct of piety, by the persuasion of Christian Teachers, or by the authority of the law, must be a point of great uncertainty, as it is one wholly unimportant. The duty of giving tithe to the service of God was inculcated in the older dispensation; it was enjoined by Christ's Apostles that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," and the missionaries of the Cross depended for their maintenance upon the liberality of the people towards their teachers. Long before Ethelwulf had promulgated the law already cited, tithes had been rendered to the Clergy in this country; his laws, the laws of his successors, and the enactments enforcing tithes down to the latest provisions in the Statutes, only serve to confirm a title springing from religious duty, and enshrined in immemorial custom. The formal records of parochial endowments since the time of Henry VIII. might be deemed a valid title, but curiously enough the Liberationists, who question the Church's title, freely admit the titles of Laymen to estates alienated from the Church some 330 years since. The alienation may have been sacrilegious, and those on whom the secularised property devolved may have been devoid of any deservings, but the lapse of centuries confirmed a lay title, scandalous in its origin, while the title of Christ's Ministers to a provision originating in an irreproachable source, is questioned in the face of the most venerable prescription.

Mr. E. Miall's argument, that because the State has dealt legislatively with Church property, it may therefore alienate it, is inconsequential—it confuses the duties of the trustee with the rights of the owner. There is no matter or property with which the State has not dealt. The State has by law regulated the distribution of real and personal property, yet that property belongs not to the State but to the subjects of

the State. The State by law compels a man out of his means to provide for his offspring, but it does not claim possession of those means. The State is the trustee and not the owner of Church property.

Mr. E. Miall discussed the title of the Church to her endowments upon capriciously devised premises, and his conclusions were irrelevant and arbitrary. In ecclesiastical as in other legal questions, their decision must depend, not on assumed motives or feelings, but on facts and on declared purpose. Mr. E. Miall's book supplies historical matter harmonising with conclusions widely differing from his own. The property assigned for the endowment of the Church could not be (in his words) the "*product of*"—or "be *created by* public law"—for law can neither produce nor create. Church property was the portion of their possessions which princes and their subjects dedicated to God, moved by pious liberality or obeying a recognised obligation. The State, the nation, became the trustee of these endowments—granted, in the words of King Ethelwulf, "as an offering to God"—*to be applied to the service of God alone*—and to be protected by the solemn warning pronounced by King Ethelred: "*Let no man take from God what belongs "to God, and which our predecessors have consecrated to Him.*"

The proposal to distinguish between ancient and modern endowments, to the advantage of the latter, is an unmistakable evidence of a proceeding which has no principle to guide it. Every particle of Church property, from the most ancient down to the newest Churches, which, with their endowments, were last year conveyed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as Stewards of the Church's possessions, all had been offered to God, and for all the nation was made the trustee.

"The Church has failed in her mission" (we are told), and so she must be disestablished and disendowed.

What evidence of this failure has been adduced? It is the presence of millions in our midst who are spiritually destitute; and that they are so, is due to the marvellous expansion of the population, following the growth of industry in varied forms and in new districts. The "Home Mission Field" for January lies before me. It opens at the title of "An Unknown Parish,"

I write this on the chance that Mr Ritchie may want to quote it. Dissenters do not serve Home Rulers for nought!

The
Church Defence Institution.
9, Bridge St, Westminster, S.W.
REGISTERED TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS
"CHURCH DEFENCE, LONDON."

Dec. 13. 1888.

Dear Mr Talbot

I see there is an insidious question to be asked by Mr Patrick O'Brien to day. which I enclose.

I will need careful answering, but as to the proportions I do not suppose the figures vary much from year to year since 1879 the Church had 79 per cent. Probably Mr O'Brien is seriously out

in his facts.

Do not trouble to answer this or return Mr Hubbard's pamphlet.

Yours very faithfully

Granville Dickson.

Rev. J. Talbot Ely M.P.

And I feel I think we shd. wait for the Archbishop's written sanction from abroad. But I cannot get an answer out of his Grace. Mr Bonsor has sent £100 for the fund.

and it tells me that the parish of West Ham, four miles east of London, had in 1841 a population of 12,738, and that it now numbers 127,593 souls. It had, in 1841, three Churches; it has now twelve Churches and thirty Clergy. I know not what other denominations have done, but obviously here is a case in which the population has outstripped the means of grace. Whence should have come the funds with which the defective ministrations could be provided? The living is in the gift of the Crown, and its value is £700 a year. The population has enlarged owing to the demand for labour of one or more railway companies, and they do not, as a rule, provide structures for spiritual instruction.

In the North there are instances even more remarkable, in which population has distanced the attempts to provide adequate religious ministrations, and in which, therefore, a very large proportion of the people would be recorded as attending no religious services whatever.

How, then, is this lamentable state of things to be remedied? Disestablish and disendow the Church of England is the reply of Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society. The prescription has the merit of originality, for it conflicts with a primary economic axiom; it meets an increasing demand by restricting the supply; it proposes to mitigate scarcity by ensuring famine. Had the Legislature in 1870, in view of the uneducated millions, decided, not that more schools should be built and more teachers trained, but that the existing schools should be converted into club-rooms and that the teachers should be cashiered, they would have created an exact precedent for Mr. Miall's specific. A large portion of the people are unprovided with spiritual instructors and places of worship. Eject, therefore, the Clergy wherever they are found, confiscate their revenues, alienate existing Churches to secular uses. Such is Mr. Miall's proposal, and I confess that I fail to see its logical propriety, nor do I admit the justice of depriving the agricultural labourers of Addington and the artisans of St. Alban, Holborn, of their Churches and of the freely given ministrations of their Clergy, because Mr. Miall discovered that the majority of the inhabitants of Liverpool went to neither Church nor Chapel. A

precedent may, in a different way, be found which would go far to explain any amount of hostility to the Church. The Rev. Thomas Binney, a renowned Dissenting preacher, left upon record (to be quoted and to be cheered in anti-Church gatherings) his conviction "that the Established Church is a great "national evil; . . . that it is an obstacle to the progress of "truth and godliness in the land; that it destroys more souls "than it saves; and that, therefore, its end is most devoutly to "be wished for by every lover of God and man." To the mind which could conceive these thoughts the disruption of the Church would assuredly be most welcome; but I venture to believe that few even of the sturdiest Dissenters would now share the feeling expressed by Mr. Binney, and that, enjoying perfect liberty themselves, they may be content that Churchmen also should be free to exercise the same precious privilege of freedom in word and deed. I have already noticed Mr. Morley's disavowal of any remaining grievance, and now I gladly record Mr. Hugh Mason's declaration (*Nonconformist*, Feb. 2, 1882): "That, with regard to the most important rela-"tionship which religion has in view with regard to the drawing "of mankind generally into closer communion with God, we "lack nothing." At the same meeting the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers "was thankful to think that the time had passed when "they had occasion to meet in order to seek for the redress of "Nonconformist grievances." Yet Mr. Mason and Mr. Rogers both insist that "religious equality" must be included in the programme of the Liberal party. I have earlier dealt with "religious equality," and presented as an impassable barrier to its attainment the Act for the Limitation of the Crown. And now I find that the Liberation Society recently determined, in carrying out their scheme of "religious equality," for the present at least, to leave untouched the Act which binds the Sovereign to the Anglican Church. By this reticence they indefinitely postpone the Republic. But then, where is their "religious equality?" By what process will they attain their nominal equality of religions while the Statute Book contains unrepealed the credentials of the Church of England to her titular nationality?

However, so let it be. Let Nonconformists desist from their assault upon the Nationality of the Church, and if they can allege any grievance clashing with the truest and most expansive religious liberty, its removal will not be asked in vain.

We would say to our Nonconformist brethren: You expatiate upon the shortcomings of the Church of England, whom you arraign as responsible for the widespread spiritual destitution which you lament. Whether the blame should fall upon the Statesmen, the Episcopate, the Clergy, or the Laity, for past remissness, do not aggravate the mischief by thwarting the efforts which are being made for its correction; rather by your own generous rivalry in the same cause stimulate the exertions of the Church. There is room for many labourers in the vast field of humanity which lies as yet unoccupied by religious agencies. The property, the revenues, the pastors of the Church, are far from adequate to the daily demands upon them, and they daily need fresh supplies, both in men and means. There can be no reason for disparaging either annual gifts or secured endowments as a provision for the ministry, for both are needed. Dissenters are supposed to look unfavourably upon endowments. Why? If annual subscriptions are righteous, their capitalised equivalent cannot be an iniquity. The source is the same—voluntary benefactions—but in the one case the benefaction is limited to annual subscriptions, in the other it assumes larger dimensions, and seeks by investment greater security for the future maintenance, and greater independence of the ministers. You are quick-sighted in detecting and prompt in exposing defects which attend the administration of the National Church. Are you interested in her efficiency as a Gospel Missioner? If you are, help her loyal members in Parliament to control the exercise of patronage, to strengthen the Bishops to exclude unfit persons from the cure of souls, and to enable the people to take their part in the acceptance of Bishops and Priests presented for institution by those who are privileged to present them. Those who share Mr. Binney's conviction touching the Church will naturally strive to realise his aspiration for its disruption; and should such an attempt be made, Churchmen will steadily and fearlessly resist it. But

I anticipate a happier future, and though we may not venture to expect that in a country which cherishes religious liberty diversity of thought shall never generate contention, we will yet trust that men, whatever their other differences, who have a common belief in Christ, may, whether in political struggles or religious controversy, observe the rule of Christian charity.

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